

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, September 8. 1694.

Quest. 1. **I** Lately happened on a Fair Book, in Manuscript, full of Charms and Conjurations, which a little startled me at first; but looking further into it, I found it full of very Devout Prayers, and many Names of God, Repeated divers times, in a very curious Order. I can't tell how to think there should be any hurt in making use of so good Prayers, and such Holy Names, which may have a secret Force in them, unknown to the most of the World, as are many other useful Arts and Sciences. Pray, Your Judgment in the case?

Ans. We remember some time since, in the Reign of King James, to have heard an Old Devil-Hunter, pretend to cast out a Devil from one who pretended to be possessed, and was in and about London, and divers other places. The Old Fellow went to Prayers, but most of his Prayer was nothing else but a Repetition of *O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Sabboth, &c.* which we then thought only a foolish Tautology, but are now inclin'd to believe 'twas no better nor worse than a Charm, or Conjuraton, that Form having been commonly made use of for those purposes, perhaps some Two or Three Thousand Years, both among *Jews* and *Heathens*. This Superstition was, it seems, spread very wide, not only the *Egyptians*, but many other Nations having learnt it from the *Jews*. Thus *Origen* against *Celsus*, as quoted by Dr. Hammond, (that inexhaustible Fountain of Learning and Judgment): "The Names of Abraham, &c. says he, joyned with the Name of God, is not only of Force in the *Jews* Prayers and Exorcisms, but almost all others that deal in Conjurations use them; whence the ignorant sort, as St. Chrysostom observes, came to mistake the Name of Abraham for the Name of some God, because of the Phrase *Οὗτος Ἀβραάμ*. Which mistake might be furthered by a way of Expression common among the *Jews*, we being inclin'd to think that the Words *Abraham*, and *Jacob*, or *Israel*, are sometimes used in Scripture for the God of Abraham, &c. Thus, to name no more, *Psal.* 24. 6. "O Jacob! And Abraham's Haven, or Bosom, is a common Paraphrase among the *Jews* for Paradise, or Heaven. So *Zebaoth*, and *Adonai*, were often used in the Paganish Incantations, as the same *Origen* tells us; and *Jamblichus* calls 'em, *Assyria nomina*, *Assyrian*, or *Jewish* Names. And *Lucian* brings in his *Alexander*, muttering I know not what barbarous words in the *Phenician*, or *Hebrew* Language, in order to cure Digases. And *Pausanias* gives the same Account of his *Lydian* Magician, in the Rites of the *Pyrestrela*. And *Josephus* had no more Wit than to believe there was a great Depth of Art in these Charms, pretending *Solomon* the Inventer of 'em, of whom the *Jews* tell many ridiculous Fables of this Nature; and that he himself understood 'em, and had seen persons raised from the Dead by them; and the foolish story of the *Jews* is common enough, That our Saviour wrought all his Miracles by Vertue of the *Tetragrammaton*, as *inutterable Name of God* joined up in his *Thigh*. However, we are sure that the *Jews* pretended to this Art; and, as it seems, sometimes accomplished strange things by it; there being a stated Order of Exorcists among them, as now among the *Papists*. Whom our Saviour intends, when he asks the *Pharisees*, by whom their *Sons* did cast out Devils? Who using the Name of the God of Abraham, &c. the Devil did sometimes obey, it being probable he was then forced to do it: *Virtute Creatoris*, as a distinction, and forc'd Homage paid unto the Supream God. Though this,

it seems, was not infallible; Else why did the *Sons* of *Sadai* leave the Name of God, and use that of *Jesus*? Of this Custom *Justin* relates, as quoted by the Doctor already mentioned: "If, says he, you call upon the Name of the God of Abraham, perhaps the Devil will obey. And *Iraneus* and *Tertullian* witness the same. However, this practice was thought so dangerous and unwarrantable, that the Christians were soon after oblig'd solemnly to renounce it at Baptism, where the ancient Form was, not only, *ἀποστασόμεαι τῷ διαβόλῳ*, I renounce the Devil, as we still say in ours, but *τοῖς ἐν ὀνόματι, καὶ τοῖς ἐν ὀνόματι, καὶ τοῖς ἐν ὀνόματι*, as the Doctor has mended it. All Incantations, Charms, Conjurations, Amulets, or Defensatives; which last were several Names of God, written or engraven in a particular way, some of which are common enough still in all Countries, the same with *Talisman*s, to procure good Fortune, or drive away ill. But one common mischief there is in all of these, for which a wise and good man should abhor 'em: They certainly, and we believe unavoidably, take all those who trust in 'em, from an immediate and actual Reliance on the Divine Providence and Protection. 'Tis in vain to say, they don't, and that there's no necessity they should do so, because we find in Fact they always do, making those who doat upon 'em weak and superstitious, and either presumptuous or desperate; and they can't be otherwise, any more than their *Astrological Brethren*, because when taken off from the Basis of God's Protection, and their own Reason, they must be floating in *Fatalities* and *Uncertainties*, and the most Notorious Contradictions; and those who worship Images may with as much Reason pretend 'tis the true God on whom they trust, using these only as the means of their Dependance and Devotion. But there's still another Reason why such Arts are dangerous, because when people are thus unwarrantably curious, and thereby throw themselves out of the divine protection (for they are not content with it in the ordinary course of God's Providence, but must have something further); then we are certain the Devil has oftentimes taken advantage against 'em, to lead 'em to greater Evils. This is notorious in the story of Dr. Dee and *Kelly*, all whose Angels at last turned to Devils, and their Purity to extraordinary downright Adultery. And if there be any thing at all in the Appearances so often boasted of, and so confidently affirmed by the *Cabalists* and *Resuscitants*, we cannot think 'em any thing else but these Delusive Spirits, who by a shew of Piety and abstruse Knowledge, lead men with the more ease into Perdition, by the most unnatural and horrid Villanies; For if that Correspondence these men talk of, be true, between their He and She-Aerial Acquaintance, as we won't pronounce they are not, what is't all less than the Depth of Witchcraft; only their *Incubus*'s and *Succubus*'s dress a little finer than when they appear to a poor ignorant nasty Old Woman? And don't these Wretches deserve Death as well as e're the Witch of Endor did, and perhaps much more? We know they will be angry, but much good may't do 'em; for we think this little stricture is much less than they deserve, who would either still put upon the World their affected Cant and Mystery, that is at bottom, hard Names, with nothing in 'em; or if there be any thing at all in it, if it has any bottom, it must lie as deep as Hell. We are sensible of an Objection that may be drawn from what we ourselves have advanced in the beginning of this Paper, which may seem to favour those Practices we have been all this while condemning; and that is, we have ow'd that Devils might be cast out, and

Diseases cured by the Name of the God of *Abraham*, &c. *Virtute Creatoris*, as *Tertullian* before; and why not now as well as then? And to make it stronger, What hurt, will it be said, can there be in such good Names and Prayers, as before in the Question? And many who make use of 'em are very devout and good men, who would abhor such things, were they Diabolical: And if the same power be manifested in Vertue of those Holy Names that has been formerly, whether some Vertue of these *Amulets* may not be hinted at in that of the *Psalmist*, "The Name of the God of *Jacob* defend thee; It being certain that this practice is very ancient.

In answer, 1st, The way of casting out Devils, and working Miracles then by the Name of God among the *Jews*, which our Saviour hints at, seems to have been much more simple, and less curious, when really performed, than that these mystical men now plead for: A calling over 'em in the Name of the Lord wrought the Miracle, as we may see by the Attempt of *Scavus*'s Sons. But what's this to all those foolish ridiculous curiosities and ceremonies which were added to it in after-ages, which were the additions either of some Magickal *Jews*; or some Apish Dunces of an *Heathen*. Again, the cure was not certain by these means, *ἵνα ὁ υἱός σου ᾀσῃ, perhaps he'll obey*, was the most that *Justin* could say on't. Again, the case is alter'd now, for though Real Miracles might then be done in the Name of the *Creator*, in distinction, as has been said, from all the numerous False Gods of the *Heathen*, that Reason now ceases, when we live among those who pretend to own the one only true God. Besides, after Christ came, these Miracles ceased; otherwise why would *Scavus*'s Sons, as before, have left the Name of God, and used that of our Saviour, in imitation of the Apostles, who, as the *Jews* used to say, In the Name of the God of *Abraham*, or God of *Sabaoth*, did command, In the Name of Jesus Christ of *Nazareth*; wherein the first Christians followed 'em, and a divine Power sometime after attended that blessed Name; at which every Knee shall bow, and which makes Devils tremble. Good Names therefore, and good things are not sufficient, when Unwarrantably, Nonsensically, or magically made use of; as was found to their sorrow, by those Exorcists so often mention'd. For good men using 'em, all that appear to be so are not so, any more than the Devil is an Angel; because he can sometimes look like one. Besides, the Christian Church has, as we have prov'd, most solemnly renounc'd all these Fancies, Councils have decreed against them, Laws have been made to prevent 'em; the Body of Christians, Wise, and Pious, and Learned, unanimously abhor 'em. The most of those that use 'em, are men desperate, and whimsical, and superstitious, and wicked, and are either Cheats, or worse cheated themselves out of their own Souls, and Eternal Happiness. The best use therefore that can be made of all these curious Books, is that which the first Christians put 'em to on their conversion, as Arguments of their Christianity, to make a curious rich Bonfire of 'em, as those at *Ephesus*, Acts 19. 19. the *ῥήματα γράμματα*, and *ἀντιστοιχίας*, and *πρότυπα*; Their magical Characters, *Philtres* and Ceremonies being Notorious in all Writers, both *Christian* and *Heathen*. As for the Name of the God of *Jacob*, undoubtedly 'tis a defence to all that trust in it; but they must then take care they don't distinguish the Thing and Name; for what Vertue can there be in so many Letters, which when taken asunder, are nothing at all, or may make other words, of a different, or perhaps contrary sense?

The only Amulet then that we know of, which may be lawfully and successfully used, is that which we are sure *David* made Tryal of with so good success, whatever skill his Son might have in *Charms* and *Incantations*; 'tis that in the 91st Psalm, "Whoso dwelleth under the Defence of the most High, shall be safe under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the Hunter, and from the Noisome Pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for

"any Terror by Night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by Day: For the Pestilence that walketh in Darknes, nor for the sickness that destroyeth at Noon-day. There shall no Evil happen unto thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy dwelling. Thou shalt go upon the Lyon and Adder, the Young Lyon and the Dragon shalt thou tread under thy Feet. With long Life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Advertisement.

THE Treatise lately Printed at *Paris*, and since Reprinted at *Amsterdam*, Entituled, *The Knowledge of the World, or the Art of Educating Youth well*: To be continued Monthly, till the whole Design is Finish'd, in Form of Letters, will be Publish'd here in very few days. Done into English by an extraordinary good Hand, (Licensed and Entered in the Hall Book.)

A Person lately Executed in the Country, making a very Penitent End, multitudes have desired an Account of it in Print; which hath put the Minister, who was an Instrument in the Mans Conversion, to draw up a Narrative of it, which will be Published by him in a very few days.

Both Printed for John Dunton at the Ravens in the Poultry.

THE Practice of the Dissenters (commonly known by the Name of *Presbyterians*) most clearly rescued from the Charge brought against it, and them, by William Lord Bishop of Derry, in a Book Entituled, *A Discourse concerning the Inventions of Men in the Worship of God, being Remarks thereon*, by J. Boyse.

Several Gentlemen of the Universities of *Oxford* and *Cambridge*, have so highly approved Mr. Sault's Translation of *Walbranches Search after Truth* (the first Volume of which was lately publish'd in London in Octavo, that so useful a Work might be fit for the Pocket,) as that it has greatly encouraged the Sale at *Oxford* and *Cambridge*, and occasioned the Undertakers to send great Numbers thither a Second Time, and to expedite the Publication of the Second Volume. The Extraordinary Usefulness of this Work of *Walbranches*, may be seen at large in the Book lately publish'd by the Reverend Mr. Norris, intituled, *Spiritual Counsel, or the Father's Advice to his Children*: Printed for S. Manship, at the Ship in Cornhill.

Lost on Thursday the 6th of September, 1694. in the Afternoon, between *Moorfields* and the Temple, a Parcel of Parchment Writings, (and one Paper) one, signed by the late Lord Chief Justice *Polexsen*, all relating to an Estate in *Kentlandshire*; whoever brings the same to Mr. Gibson, at Sir John Focke's in *Leathbury*, London, shall have a Guinea Reward.

LONDON, Printed for John Dunton at the Ravens in the Poultry, 1694.